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## ***Haleakalā National Park Office of the Superintendent***

October 5, 2005

### **Commercial Use at Sunrise: Interim Operations Plan**

#### ***Background***

Haleakalā National Park has received an unprecedented increase this summer in visitors and congestion at the summit of the park for the sunrise. More visitors are arriving via commercial companies with Incidental Business Permits as well as in non-commercial use vehicles. This increase in vehicles has raised significant public health and safety concerns at Pu‘u ‘Ula‘ula (Red Hill/Summit Observatory), Haleakalā Visitor Center (HVC) and Kalahaku Overlook parking areas in the summit area. There is limited space at these parking areas and Haleakalā Visitor Center is the only parking area with designated commercial vehicle stalls. Each day at sunrise, about 35 non-commercial vehicles have been parking illegally outside of marked stalls and an additional 20 that are turned away for lack of space at HVC. At Pu‘u ‘Ula‘ula, both commercial and non-commercial vehicles have been parking outside of stalls, in the traffic lanes or against the center median of the loop impeding traffic flow. The parking problem is often so severe that traffic has become gridlocked preventing access by ambulance, law enforcement and fire vehicles. Not only is this hazardous, it also violates laws requiring a clear route for emergency vehicles to and through parking areas to buildings and visitor use areas. The large number of vehicles translates into excessive crowds at viewing areas causing them to overflow into critical habitat areas, off-trail areas, and potential unsafe cliff areas.

The lack of emergency vehicle access problem is applicable at all three parking areas, and is especially critical to the Haleakalā Visitor Center parking area. More than one million people per year visit the 10,000 ft summit area of Haleakalā. Park Rangers respond to a variety of incidents including medical emergencies (cardiac arrest, heart attacks, seizures, respiratory emergencies, altitude illness, minor trauma, etc.) and law enforcement incidents. It is vital that unobstructed access, egress and emergency vehicle parking areas are maintained in these heavily used areas.

**Plan**

An Interim Operations Plan (IOP) is being implemented by the Park to accommodate the safe use of the limited parking available in the three parking areas at the summit area during the hours from pre-sunrise through two hours after sunrise (“Sunrise Use Period”). That accommodation will be accomplished by allocating the use of these limited spaces between commercial and non-commercial users as discussed below. The IOP will be in effect until a more permanent solution is identified through development of the Park’s Commercial Services Plan (CSP). The CSP is anticipated to start mid-late 2006 with a completion date of two years later. This IOP may be subject to amendment should existing conditions change.

**Decision**

Based on the past five years commercial activity, Incidental Business Permit holders for bicycles have typically filled during the Sunrise Use Period ten of the thirteen available commercial stalls with the remaining three going to all other permit holders (astronomy and vehicle tours). This ratio will remain in effect during the term of this IOP.

Commercial use vehicles that can fit in a standard-sized vehicle stall will also be able to park at Pu’u ‘Ula’ula Summit Observatory and Kalahaku Overlook parking areas as space is available. As vehicles are restricted to marked parking stalls, and if crowding at Summit and Kalahaku lots continue to increase, the park may look at ways to ensure that space continues to be available for non-commercial use users.

Commercial operators with Incidental Business Permits for vehicle tours are currently limited to two vans or small buses. No large passenger or school buses (26 passengers and over) will be permitted until two hours after sunrise.

Commercial operators with Incidental Business Permits for bicycle tours are limited to a total of ten commercial stalls. By manipulating vehicles and trailers, nineteen vans with trailers can be accommodated in these ten stalls without impeding traffic. These nineteen tours will be distributed among the current five companies authorized for sunrise tours—Bike It Maui, Cruiser Phil’s, Maui Downhill, Maui Mountain Cruisers, and Mountain Riders, as follows:

- These will be distributed each calendar year based on market share of the previous year. The three companies with the largest market share of tours will receive five tours each with the fourth company receiving three tours and the fifth company receiving one tour.
- Bike tours will continue to use the ten stalls closest to the exit of Haleakalā Visitor Center parking area with the first ten pulling into each stall and the remaining nine parking perpendicular to the first ten in three lines of three vans and trailers.
- Parking Vehicles/Vans on the Spur Road, dropping trailers on Spur Road, or parking vehicles, vans, or trailers in any area other than a marked parking stall is not allowed.

- For up to two hours after sunrise, the nine perpendicular parked vans/trailers may park and/or drop their trailer in the private vehicle parking area as space permits until such time their designated commercial stall becomes available.
- This allowance to park in non-commercial use vehicle stalls for two hours after sunrise is for this interim period only.

### ***Incidental Business Permits / Commercial Use Authorizations***

Commercial sunrise tours/activities originating and terminating outside of the Park currently are authorized only if an Incidental Business Permit (IBP) has been issued to the commercial operator by the Park. That system of authorization may be replaced during the operation of the IOP with a system of Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) issued under the statutory authority of the 1998 Concessions Management Improvement Act.

Use of the limited parking available during the Sunrise Use Period was allocated to accommodate safe use by all users prior to this IOP by freezing at 2003 levels the number of IBPs authorizing bicycle tours during the Sunrise Use Period. That allocation also will continue through limitations on the issuance of IBPs and CUAs while this IOP is in effect.

### ***Implementation***

August 21, 2005: Commercial operators with Vehicle IBPs

Exception # 1: Haleakalā Bike Company is allowed 2 vans & 1 small bus

November 1, 2005: Commercial operators with Bicycle IBPs

Interim Operations Plan may be revised based on circumstances and experiences. For example, if small buses (16-25 passengers) can no longer be accommodated at Kalahaku Parking area and/or vans (15 passenger) at Pu'u 'Ula'ula/ Summit Observatory or Kalahaku parking areas, the IOP may be revised to change the ratio at Haleakalā Visitor Center to nine stalls for bicycle permit holders and four stalls for all other commercial vehicles. This would then change the number of sunrise bicycle tours from 19 to 15. These will be distributed based on market share of the previous year. The three companies with the largest market share of tours will receive four tours each with the fourth company receiving two tours and the fifth company receiving one tour.

### ***Point of Contact***

Additional information or comments about the commercial use operations should be directed to Commercial Use Manager at 808-572-4440.

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